

Salvation without works, in St. *Paul's* sense
of it, considered, 2

IN A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

H A V E R I L,

DECEMBER 14, 1760.

WITH A

PREFACE, containing the Reasons of
its Publication.

By T H O M A S M I L W A Y.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. WAUGH, at the *Turk's-Head*, in *Lombard-Street*; and W. FENNER, at the *Angel and Bible*, in *Paternoster-Row*. 1761.



P R E F A C E.

TO give a common discourse to the publick, never intended by the author to see the light, may be thought to require some apology; and yet I shall make no other than this, that it was judged suitable to the occasion on which it was preached, and was published at the request of those who thought so.

The occasion was this; the supporting the honour and credit of christianity, against those who with a show of zeal for its interest (I hope without design) were sapping the foundations of it; and who to give the greater honour to faith were weakening the obligations of a holy life. This must always be the case, where the whole of christianity, is resolved into a confident reliance upon the grace of the gospel, to a neglect of the great design of it, to promote the practice of real goodness.

They whose professed design is the salvation of souls, (the noblest that can enter into the heart of man) have introduced their publick instructions among us; and though I could never think their distinguishing tenets agreeable to the word of God, yet had they layed less stress upon these, and laboured to promote a real reformation of the lives and manners of men, upon the common and

undisputed principles of religion, they would have had my best wishes for their success.

But the contrary to this has been very apparent. The point they have aimed at, has looked more like faction than religion; for this they set out with; the persuading the people, that their publick instructors, were undermining the faith it was their duty to maintain; that the gospel was neither understood nor preached by them, and that they whose duty it was, to watch for mens souls, were joined in one common confederacy to destroy them. Very charitable truly! — and had this been the case, it would have justified their warmest zeal. — But how could they tell this? Was it right to publish such an alarm without the strongest evidence that this was the case? This I am sure of, it was very contrary to the temper and spirit of the gospel. — To make good so heavy a charge as this, it had been a proper employment for these reformers of the publick faith, to have commenced, for a time at least, itinerant hearers, rather than preachers, that they might have been able to ascertain the fact. But even then, it had amounted only to this, that what they call the gospel was not preached; and there had been this privilege in reserve, of an appeal from their tribunal, to a more infallible one, the sacred scriptures. — By these let their doctrines be tryed, and I am well assured, that
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what they call the gospel, will appear such as Christ and his apostles never preached. — The doctrines to which they have given this sacred venerable sanction, are such as these, — that men are to go to Christ in their sins — that the greater sinners the more welcome — that Christ hath done all for them, and that they have nothing to do but believe that he has, with an absolute unconditional reliance on him for salvation — that men may be made righteous, without the practice of good works — that the faith that justifies is an absolute assurance their sins are forgiven, and that to doubt of this is the way to damnation — in short, that every man may be saved if he will, but that no man can do any thing towards promoting his own salvation — of the truth of these allegations I am furnished with ample proofs. Excellent doctrine indeed ! If this is the gospel, I think I may be allowed to say, it is such as a wise and good man would be ashamed of. This men may be converted to, and be strangers to that renovation of heart and life, that is the scripture account of true conversion ; — and what have been the evidences of a conversion to this gospel ; and of their having the spirit of God, to which they lay extravagant claims ? Why not those fruits of the spirit an inspired apostle hath given us, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, &c. I am sorry to say there is
scarce

is scarce the shadow of these — the effects have been adequate to their cause, viz. confident pretensions — boasted attainments, publishing in a vain-glorious manner their assurance of forgiveness — attended with voices from heaven, visions, immediate inspirations, swoonings, &c. and every species of enthusiasm and phanaticism. — These are the triumphs of methodism as it hath appeared among us — of the truth of these there are enough I can appeal to, nay I might appeal to themselves; and though I make no doubt but they have been followed by some with an honest design, and all have not drunk in the same spirit, yet their most genuine converts have manifested a spirit that would do little honour to any religion. — This I have a right to say, that they have abounded in the most cruel censures of those who are not of their party; and if they may be called converts, they are rather the pity, than the admiration of those who observe them. I shall not abuse the reader's patience, with what some who call themselves preachers, have dared to utter in the face of all the world — every friend to the toleration, must grieve for the abuse of it; and it is really amazing, that * two gentlemen of the established church, and who share in her emoluments, should send out men, the most ignorant and confident, they could well have made choice of, and that under the shelter of

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of a toleration, to abuse and vilify their own order, and inspire the lowest of the people, with a contempt of a regular and standing ministry; in this they have too well succeeded. I charitably hope, they who are called methodists in other parts of the kingdom, have not imbibed the like spirit with these, if they have, it bodes ill, not only to religion, but the peace and good order of society. — Low as the christian ministry is laid, sure something better than ignorance and confidence, are requisite qualifications for it. I would therefore ask those gentlemen, whether they have had a proper trial of these mens abilities to preach the gospel? If they have not, how can they answer it to their own consciences, or the publick to encourage them. — Do they know that they lay claim to immediate inspiration, and rank themselves with prophets and apostles, and that the weak, the false things they utter, nay, the cruel censures they throw out, they dare impute to the Holy Spirit; let them know this, and blush for them; yea, if they have any bowels of compassion, they will tremble for them! It is high time those gentlemen seek out for better hands, or lay them under such restraint, as decency and the laws of their country require — till they do this, the world will have a right to think, it is something very different from the salvation of souls, they are aiming at.

It

It is difficult to say, which hath done greater injury to christianity, enthusiasm or infidelity ; it is fit we maintain the honour and credit of it against both. It hath been done already to much greater advantage than I can pretend to — the sense of the apostle, where there is most danger of his being abused to the purposes of licentiousness, hath been fully vindicated, by those who have professedly handled the subject ; but as this discourse is designed chiefly for their use, into whose hands larger treatises do not come, it has been thought it may have its use. The design of it is to vindicate the grace of the gospel in perfect harmony with the obligation of a holy life. The passage I have chose, and others parallel with it, have been sadly perverted. Ignorant declaimers have taken occasion from them, to depreciate good works, though it was the great design of the gospel to inforce the practice of them. I thought it might answer a better end, to make such a passage the subject of discourse, than one, in which the practice of holiness to our final acceptance, is in so many words enjoined — to show, that scripture is ever consistent with itself, and that when the grace of God is most extolled, a holy life is not only implied, but is, and must ever remain, of the highest obligation.

T. M.

Haveril, Jan. 11, 1761.



2 TIM. i. 9.

Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.

 T. Paul from the affectionate regard he bore for *Timothy*, (whom he calls his son in the faith) writes to him this second epistle, to direct and encourage him in the work of the ministry, to which he had devoted himself.

He begins it with his usual salutation; letting him know, that though he was absent from him, (being then a prisoner at *Rome*) yet, that he remembered him in his prayers, desiring if it was the will of God, he might see him again, to their mutual comfort and joy; but as that was uncertain, ap-
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prehending

prehending he should soon fall a victim to the persecuting rage of his enemies, he writes to him to stir him up, to the diligent and faithful discharge of his office. He would excite in him a sacred ambition of behaving worthy the pious and holy stock from which he sprang. The apostle remembered, and he would have *Timothy* recollect it too, the unfeigned faith that dwelt first in his grandmother *Lois*, and in his mother *Eunice*, and which he observed with pleasure dwelt also in him.

Timothy's mother was a jewess, his father was a greek or gentile, the care of his education therefore, devolved on his mother, in which it is probable, she was assisted by the piety of his grand-mother, whose joint endeavours, were blessed to the training him up in early life, in the fear and service of God. — He was the earliest convert we read of, set apart by the apostle to the work of the ministry, of which he reminds him at the sixth verse, “wherefore I
“ put thee in remembrance, that thou stir
“ up the gift of God that is in thee, by
“ the putting on of my hands;” by which the apostle means, not an ordinary grace, but an extraordinary gift, such as was peculiar to that age of the christian church. But whatever it was, it might be improved or neglected by him; it was necessary therefore he should be exhorted, to a diligent application
of

of the gift he had received, to the great ends and purposes for which it was given him; namely, the honour and interest of christianity. And as the difficulties he might meet with, would call for the exercise of courage and fortitude, he bid him at the 8th verse, "be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God." By the testimony of our Lord, he means the true doctrine of Christ; or if it be referred to any particular doctrine, it was that capital one, of the resurrection of Christ, upon which the truth of christianity depended; and which the apostles were especially commissioned to preach and publish to the world. He was to decline no difficulties he might meet with, in bearing his testimony to this; nor to be ashamed of him, who was then in bonds for the sake of it; nor yet be unwilling himself to suffer in the same cause, according to that supernatural power which God had given him. It followeth — "who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, given us in Christ before the world began." The apostle was himself so warmed with the subject contained in these words, that he would recommend it to *Timothy*, to make it the frequent subject of

his preaching ; and so to do, is unquestionably the duty of every christian minister. But it is of great importance that the passage be rightly explained. — Nothing could be further from the apostle's meaning, than hereby to weaken the obligation christians are under to the practice of righteousness, which is expressly required to their final acceptance with God ; I shall therefore consider the words in this connection, and to this end I would,

- I. Take notice of the benefit the apostle speaks of, viz. the putting us in the way of salvation, and to this end calling us with a holy calling.
- II. I would consider, to what the apostle ascribes this benefit, negatively and positively expressed, not to any antecedent works of righteousness in us, but to the free purpose and grace of God, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. — And as this account has been perverted, to a meaning not intended by the apostle, and it has been from hence inferred, that good works are of no avail to our acceptance with God, I would therefore shew in the
- III^d. Place, that the practice of righteousness, to our personal acceptance to eternal life, does nevertheless stand in full force and obligation.

I. We

- I. We will consider the benefit of which the apostle speaks, viz. the putting us in the way of salvation, and to this end calling us with a holy calling.

We have here the merciful intention of God, as it respects our salvation, and the manner in which he thought fit to acquaint us with it. The design was no less than this; our recovery from a state of death, to a blessed immortality. — All flesh had corrupted their way; all had sinned, and come short of the glory of God. The happiness for which man was designed, and which he would have been capable of, had he continued upright, he forfeited by his disobedience; in consequence of which, he incurred the sentence of everlasting death. — In these circumstances, God of his great mercy was pleased to entertain the kindest intentions towards the human race, of delivering us from the condemnation our guilt deserved, and of putting us in the way of life and happiness. So generous was the love of God, that it had respect to both of these; the first we had no right to claim, and the other was such an instance of his bounty, as demands the devoutest acknowledgments from every human heart.

In each of these views, is our salvation set forth in the sacred scriptures; by our deliverance from the wrath to come, and our recovery

recovery to a state of perfection and happiness in God's eternal kingdom. — I would observe, that when the apostle speaks of our being **SAVED**, he must be understood to mean, as in other places, the being put into the way of obtaining that happiness we had forfeited, or the being brought by the mercy of God, under these means of salvation, which if not neglected, would issue in our eternal life. The being **SAVED**, in the full and compleat sense of the word, it cannot mean, that is, reserved to a more distant period, when the christian shall have finished his course in this world, and partake of the reward which God has promised — it has its beginning in this world, in the being delivered from condemnation, from the dominion of sin, and the being brought to a state of sincere though imperfect holiness; and when hereupon a christian enjoys the well-grounded hope of eternal life, he may be said to be **SAVED**, and his persevering stedfast unto the end, will secure to him, the compleat and everlasting enjoyment of that salvation.

But who ever reads the epistles of *St. Paul* with attention, will easily perceive, that when he speaks of being **SAVED**, he more generally means by it, the merciful intention of God, as it respects the human race, and the recovering us to the hope of eternal life, by our Lord Jesus Christ — previous to this merciful design of God, all mankind concluded
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under sin, were in a state of death, from which they were in no capacity of delivering themselves; in themselves considered, they were without strength, shut up under the sentence of death, which without the intervening mercy of God, had taken place upon all mankind. It was the promise of God, that rendered their condition hopeful, which had otherwise been without remedy. And therefore we find the apostle, speaking of the Gentiles before their conversion, and while in their heathen state, as "without God, and "without hope in the world;" and when they were brought from their apostacy into the kingdom of God, by faith in Jesus Christ, they were said to be SAVED, not in the full meaning of it, *i. e.* not actually possessed of this salvation, which they would be, upon their persevering in the faith and practice of the gospel; but they were put into the way of life, whereas before their conversion, they were "aliens, enemies in their "minds by wicked works, in a state of "death, without God, and without hope;" but now they were become the people of God, taken into covenant with him, brought under the promise, made capable of eternal life, and were furnished with those means of grace, which if improved, would bring them to the actual possession of it.

It is worth observing, that the apostle when writing to the *Ephesians*, who had been converted

converted from a state of heathenism to christianity, applies this privilege to them — he tells them they were **SAVED**; he speaks of it as their common privilege, by grace ye are **SAVED**, not actually possessed of this salvation, but by being brought within the pale of the christian church, and under the promise of eternal life, they were in a state of salvation; whereas before their conversion, they were under guilt, and in a state of condemnation.

It is I think very manifest, that when the apostle in this manner addresses himself to collective bodies of men, taken into covenant by faith in Jesus Christ, and tells them they were **SAVED**; he must mean, their being brought into the way of salvation, or by the mercy of God, put into such a state, in which if they, “continued grounded and settled, and were not moved from the hope of the gospel,” they would undoubtedly obtain eternal life.

This is agreeable to other passages in the epistles, where the benefit I am speaking of (the being **SAVED**) is in like manner applied. Thus *Acts* xvi. 31. St. Paul tells the jailor, “believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be **SAVED** ;” and *1 Thess.* v. 9. “for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” In the same sense, God is said to be “the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe.” *1 Tim.* iv. 10.

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We read upon the conversion of *Zaccheus*, our Lord said, "this day is salvation come to this house," *Luke* xix. 9. which means that by faith in Christ as the true Messiah, he was brought into the way of salvation. Thus *1 Pet.* iii. 13. Baptism is said to save us; but in what sense is this to be understood? Can it mean that baptism alone would be effectual to any man's salvation? This cannot be; but it means, that as by baptism they were taken into the kingdom and church of Christ, they were by it brought under the means, or put into the way of salvation. By baptism they lifted themselves under the banner of Christ, and upon their persevering fidelity, they would finally obtain eternal life. So it is said in the *Acts*, that the "Lord added to the church such as should be saved;" *ch.* ii. 47. it might have been better rendered, according to the original *THE SAVED*; thus are christians said to be *SAVED* by hope, and yet they who shall be actually saved, will have got beyond hope and triumph, in the compleat possession of that salvation they once hoped for.

And that the apostle is thus to be understood in the text, is I think plain beyond all dispute; because the salvation he speaks of, is without any regard to works of piety or righteousness, and therefore cannot be applied to our final acceptance to eternal life, for in that sense of it we are assured, that re-

gard will be had to our works; which is as express as words can make it, “ for God will
 “ render to all men according to their deeds,
 “ to them who by a patient continuing in
 “ well doing, seek for glory, honour, and
 “ immortality, eternal life.” And again,
 “ glory, honour and peace, to every man
 “ that worketh good, to the jew first, and
 “ also to the gentile.” And we read in the
Revelation, “ blessed are they that do his
 “ commandments, that they may have a
 “ right to the tree of life.”

When therefore the apostle speaks of being SAVED without works, he must refer to the merciful design of God, the making us capable of eternal life, or bringing us under the promise of it; this is a sense, that will make the apostle consistent with himself, which I apprehend he could not be, if we understand the being SAVED, in the full and compleat sense of that expression.—I thought it necessary to establish this sense of the word SAVED, because a great deal depends upon it; the whole controversy in regard to good works, as they relate to salvation, depends upon it. It is, I apprehend, the only clue that can lead us to the true interpretation of those passages, where all works are intirely excluded in the affair of man’s salvation; for take it in the sense I have considered it, *i. e.* let us understand the being SAVED, as it is plain the apostle does, by being

ing put into the way of salvation, and brought under the promise of it, by faith in Jesus Christ ; and all works of whatever kind are to be excluded ; this is to be ascribed to the original mercy and love of God.

But then, though no works of ours could contribute to this, yet to our actual personal title to eternal life, holiness, or righteousness, or good works, (for they have all the same meaning) are indispensably required. — This then is the benefit of which the apostle speaks in the text ; the being brought under the promise of eternal life, and put into the way of obtaining it. — A most excellent privilege, and that calls for our devoutest acknowledgments to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sin had exposed us to the anger of God, and by consequence to condemnation and death ; but the compassions of God reached our case ; his mercy provided for our salvation ; and if we accept the provision God has made for our happiness, by complying with the terms of it, we shall not come short of it. This benefit, great and excellent as it is, is freely tendered to our acceptance. It is a salvation all are capable of, and from which none will be excluded, but those who receive this grace in vain ; if being put into the way of obtaining eternal life, we seek it in earnest, if we strive and labour to obtain it, we shall enjoy the beginnings, the first fruits of it at present, and

shall reap the full harvest at that period, when the Son of man shall come, to the compleat and everlasting salvation of all true believers in him.

And as by the mercy of God we are put into the way of salvation, so to this end he hath called us with a holy calling. Hereby I apprehend, we are to understand the gospel. It is in this sense the apostle exhorts the *Ephesians* ch. iv. 1. "to walk worthy of ' the vocation wherewith they were called," *i. e.* worthy the gospel they made profession of. It is spoke of under different characters, as a high calling, *Phil.* iii. 14. And in the epistle to the *Hebrews* as a heavenly calling, both implying, that the gospel was of divine original, that it came from heaven, and was designed to conduct us thither. In the text it is mentioned under the character of a holy calling; signifying that the gospel, as it is the doctrine of God, so it is a most holy institution. Though it is a discovery of the richest grace that was ever manifested, yet purity and holiness are the very genius, temper, and tendency of the gospel. It was not without design, that the apostle described the gospel of our salvation as a holy calling, that it might be an established conviction with every christian, that though the being SAVED, is from first to last to be ascribed to the grace of God, yet that the gospel in which this grace is manifested, is designed

ed to convert men to that purity and holiness, which is the beginning of eternal life; the consummation of which, will consist in a perfection of holiness, in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Which brings me to the

IId. Head of discourse, which leads me to consider, to what this excellent benefit is ascribed, negatively and positively, “ who hath saved us and called “ us with a holy calling, not according “ to our works, but according to his “ own purpose and grace given,” &c.

Let it be remembered, that the being *SAVED*, as it is here intended by the apostle, is the merciful design of God, of putting us into the way of life, and calling us to those means capable of being improved to our eternal happiness. — And this in the *first place* was not owing to any antecedent works of righteousness in us.

Previous to this merciful design of God, mankind were in a state of sin; in circumstances of guilt, “ strangers to God, enemies “ in their mind by wicked works; without “ hope, yea, without life, dead in trespasses and sins.” In this manner, the apostle represents the condition of those, who had been converted to the christian faith. *Titus* iii. 3. “ For we ourselves also were “ sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, “ serving

“ serving divers lusts and pleasures; living
 “ in malice, hateful, and hating one ano-
 “ ther, but after that the kindness and love
 “ of God our Saviour towards mankind ap-
 “ peared, not by works of righteousness
 “ which we had done.” Mankind con-
 sidered as finners, which was the case with
 all before this grace appeared, (I say in these
 circumstances considered) had nothing that
 could claim or deserve the regard God was
 pleased to manifest.

Antecedent to this design of God, there
 was nothing but misery and wretchedness,
 for all were concluded under sin; this did
 excite the compassion of God, but could
 not deserve it. All flesh had corrupted their
 way, sin was become a universal malady, and
 all were liable to condemnation. That God
 should manifest the mercy he did, to the
 human race, design its recovery and salva-
 tion, and to this end, send his Son into the
 world, was not therefore owing to any pre-
 vious worthiness or desert of theirs. They
 were obnoxious to the displeasure of God,
 when he entertained the merciful design of
 their salvation. It was when enemies (says
St. Paul) we were reconciled, and when we
 were yet without strength, in due time Christ
 died for us; and therefore no deeds or works
 which had been done, antecedent to the
 compassionate design of God, could at all
 move him to consider our case, or provide
 for

for our happiness. He SAVED us, or brought us into the way of salvation, called us to his kingdom and grace, put us under the means of salvation, without the least regard to what we had done, or could do to deserve it. — Though here it is necessary we remember, that the works that are excluded from any share in our salvation, refer to the period antecedent to the gracious purpose of God, in calling us into the kingdom of his Son, and not to the state and circumstances of christians, after they were included within the pale of the christian church. And it is the not attending to this distinction, that hath occasioned the unhappy mistakes among christians in regard to good works; in the former case they are to be set aside, as not at all contributing to move or incline the blessed God, to form the original design and purpose of our salvation, in which sense alone the apostle is to be understood when he says, not by works of *righteousness*, &c. But then, there is a direct and positive reason assigned for this, it was owing to the free purpose and grace of God, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

The hope of eternal life we are recovered to, is always spoke of in this manner; is ascribed, as it is fit it should, to the unmerited favour and love of God, in the iid. chapter to the *Ephesians*, ver. 4. &c.
 “ But God who was rich in mercy, for the
 “ great

“ great love wherewith he loved us, when
 “ we were dead in sins, hath quickened us
 “ together with Christ: (by grace are ye
 “ SAVED) and hath raised us up together,
 “ and made us sit together in heavenly places
 “ in Christ; that in the ages to come he
 “ might shew the exceeding riches of his
 “ grace, in his kindness towards us through
 “ Jesus Christ. For by grace are ye SAVED,
 “ through faith, and not of yourselves;
 “ it is the gift of God: not of works, lest
 “ any man should boast.”

The plain meaning of which is, that our
 salvation by Christ, was wholly owing to the
 free bounty and mercy of God, without regard
 to any works or worthiness of ours. In
 this great affair they are all to be set aside,
 and the whole honour of our salvation to be
 ascribed to the original love of God.

The design itself was wholly from God.
 This plan of mercy was formed in the breast
 of God. It took its rise from his own
 benignity. He foresaw our wretched miserable
 state; the sad effects of our apostacy
 from God, and before the foundations of
 the world were laid, of his mere goodness
 contrived our recovery. It was not that he
 foresaw we should deserve so gracious an
 interposure, but because he fore-knew we
 should want it, but could neither obtain it
 ourselves, nor lay him under any obligation
 to

to it. It was his own purpose and grace given us in Christ, &c.

And as the design itself, so *the manner in which* God was pleased to execute it, took its rise from the same goodness. "For it was God so loved the world as to send his only begotten Son: and herein was love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us:" the gift of Christ, and the benefits he was the means of, were all of them instances of the kindness and love of God. It was his compassion, that led him to make this provision for us. All that Christ did on earth, and is doing for us since he went up to heaven, is to be ascribed to the great love of God.

Our redemption by his death, and our eternal life by his resurrection, are the fruits of the same kindness. "For we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." And it is God who hath quickened us by Christ, or by his resurrection raised us to the hope of a glorious resurrection to eternal life.

Again. That we have been acquainted with this provision made for our happiness, is to be ascribed to the good will of God; that we who were the posterity of Gentiles, without God, and without hope, should be called into the kingdom of his dear Son, is to be imputed solely to the merciful and gra-

cious purpose of God. We were of Gentile stock, and sprang from heathen ancestors ; it was the mercy of God that made the difference betwixt us and them. They sat in the region of darkness, “ the day-spring from on “ high hath visited us.” It was the merciful appointment of God to which nothing we had done could contribute from whence this difference took its rise. Our lot might have been cast among heathens, without any hope, but from the uncovenanted mercies of God ; but he hath called us by his grace, hath committed to us the word of reconciliation, and condescends by all the arguments and motives taken from his own benevolence, and persuades us by his ambassadors in Christ’s stead, to be reconciled to God. So that upon the best grounds it may be said he hath SAVED us, and called us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

But as this account has been perverted to a meaning, not intended by the apostle, and it has been inferred from hence, that good works are of no avail to our acceptance with God, I proceed to shew in the

III^d. Place, that the practice of righteousness, to our personal acceptance to eternal life, does nevertheless stand in full force and obligation.

— Here

—Here it may be natural to enquire, are no works of piety and righteousness then necessary, to our being final partakers of this salvation? The scriptures say no such thing.— They assert the contrary — that they are necessary — indispensably necessary, to any well-grounded hope of heaven, and without which no man can ever see God.

Some through ignorance or inattention may be ready to say, where is the consistence for the apostle to say, that God hath SAVED us and called us, without any regard to works of righteousness, and yet assert that these are indispensably required in order to salvation? Why this the scriptures do assert, and there is a perfect harmony betwixt each of these. — The mistake arises purely from not observing the distinction made in scripture, between the being brought into a state of salvation, the having provision made for it by the mercy of God, and the having an actual personal title to it. The first of these is purely gratuitous, without any terms or conditions required of us. But to the second, personal holiness is required, and cannot but be insisted on — that God should design and contrive our salvation, and send his Son from heaven to make provision for it, was all of grace; that he should call us to partake of this salvation, and tender it to our acceptance, was exclusive not only of all desert, but of any qualifications that might

induce him to it ; but after this grace was manifested, and God had done so much for our happiness, then it became our duty to work out our own salvation. — The providing for our happiness, and putting us into a capacity for it, is one thing — the being finally accepted to eternal life, is another — from the first, all works must be for ever excluded — but to presume upon the other, without a holy virtuous life, is a delusion, that must in its consequences, be fatal to the souls of men. — To render it as plain as I can, (for I would consult the meanest capacity to whom I speak) give me leave to illustrate it by the following instance.

Put the case of a prince, whose subjects had taken up arms against him, by which they incurred the guilt and punishment of traitors. — The prince unwilling to proceed to extremities, and moved with compassion, publishes an act of grace ; and of his mere bounty, renders them capable of the privileges they had forfeited ; only to their actually possessing them, insists that for the future, they continue in their duty and allegiance to him. — Who does not see that their pardon, and their being received to favour is purely owing to the clemency of their prince ? — it could be ascribed to no desert of theirs ; for (by the supposition) they had incurred the punishment of traitors ; their future allegiance, though he cannot but require

quire it, is no cause of the grace and clemency of their prince. Their original pardon flowed from him freely, and yet to their actually enjoying the immunities of faithful subjects, their future duty cannot be dispensed with.

And so it is in the case before us; God's sending his Son into the world to proclaim peace and pardon to his offending creatures, was his publishing an act of grace; that he should do this in a manner worthy of himself by the mediation of Jesus Christ, and by him, grant us the promise of eternal life, was to be ascribed to his own purpose and grace; this was all from the original bounty and compassion of God, no terms or conditions were here required; but then that we be actually invested with the high privileges his grace provided, a life of holiness is absolutely necessary. — This illustration I should think, must carry conviction with it. — But I shall not rest the matter here, but — proceed to confirm the truth of it, that works of righteousness though they cannot merit eternal life, and could contribute nothing to the original grant and promise of it; yet now that this grace is manifested they are indispensably necessary to our personal title to it.

(1.) The necessity of this was established in the original purpose and decree of God. By this I mean, that when the plan of our salvation

salvation was laid in the divine mind, holiness was ordained as the necessary means and qualification for it. That mankind who had forfeited eternal life, should be made capable of it, was fixed in the purpose or decree of God; and the original design he laid, was that we should be holy in order to the being happy. Thus in 1st. of *Ephesians*, ver. 4. the apostle having given thanks to God for his grace bestowed on the Gentiles, in choosing them for his people, and calling them into the kingdom of the Messiah, says, "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us, &c. According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." The meaning of which is, that when the Gentiles (in like manner as the Jews had been) were made choice of, to be the people of God, it was that they might be holy and blameless in their lives, or as the apostle elsewhere says, "a peculiar people zealous of good works." And when in the second chapter he tells them, "by grace ye are SAVED," *i. e.* recovered to the hope of salvation, he adds at the tenth verse, "for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before ordained that we should walk in them;" where the apostle shows, that though no works of theirs had contributed

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to their being brought to the faith of the gospel, yet being brought to the knowledge of it, it was to be considered as God's new creation, by which they were to be formed to purity and holiness, agreeable to the original purpose and decree of God.

And in the second epistle to the *Thessalonians*, chap. ii. ver. 3. the same thing is expressed, namely, the appointment of God to holiness, in order to eternal life; "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth;" and St. *Peter* writing to those of the dispersion, who were brought to faith in Jesus Christ, speaks of them as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, *i. e.* set apart to be so, that by the fruits of holiness, they might show forth the praises of him, who had called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. From whence it appears that when the plan of our salvation was laid in the divine mind, holiness was ordained as the necessary means or qualification for it.

(2.) Further, it was the very end for which this grace was manifested. We are by it laid under the highest obligation to all holiness of life. Thus the apostle to *Titus*, tells him, that to this end the grace of God bringing salvation, had appeared unto all men, teaching them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, &c. The argument before me, is too extensive

extensive for me to enter into; the doctrines which to this end Christ came to teach, like their author, were holy and heavenly, the life and character of the Son of God were so in the most perfect manner, and are purposefully recorded for our imitation. It was the design of his death, not only to be a sacrifice for sin, but to deliver us from the dominion of it, for "he offered himself without spot to God, to purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God." And in the forementioned epistle to *Titus*; "he gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar people," &c.

Our redemption by Christ, is the strongest argument to a holy life, and being redeemed by his death, we are bound to be zealous of good works, as we would not defeat the intention of his dying for us. — I might show that his resurrection from the dead, is of like force and obligation, why we should walk in newness of life; his ascension into heaven, is applied to the same practical purpose, as is his continual intercession for us; not to exempt us from the obligations of duty, but that our sincere, though imperfect services, may be accepted.

(3.) We may observe further, in the third place, that good works, or the fruits of holiness, are included in that faith, that will eventually justify and save us.

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Mere faith without its proper and genuine fruits cannot save us; nor can that which implies no more than relying upon Christ, at all avail to our acceptance. A man may do this, many have done it without repentance and a holy life. The faith that will eventually justify, is the belief of the heart, the effectual faith that purifies the heart and worketh by love; it is a faith that includeth not only the belief of the gospel, but obedience to it; in short, a faith that hath every grace and virtue in its train.

The doctrine of faith was very early corrupted in the christian church; it was so in the times of the apostles; for there were those who taught, that the bare believing in Christ without any regard to good works, would avail to salvation. The apostle *James* set himself to oppose this corruption: chap. ii. 17. telling them, that "faith if it hath not works is dead, being alone." He shews that *Abraham*, that great-example and pattern of believers, was justified by works, ver. 21. *i. e.* by such a faith as was productive of obedience to the commands of God; so that his faith wrought with his works, and by works his faith was made perfect; and it followeth ver. 24. "you see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," *i. e.* by works that proceed from faith, and by which it appears to be an operative living principle. And that none might ever pre-

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sume to lessen the importance of good works, out of pretence of giving greater honour to faith, it stands recorded as an everlasting caution to christians, to the end of time; for as the body without the soul is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

(4.) But I add fourthly, though our being **SAVED** is originally to be ascribed to the mercy of God, yet the holiness of God cannot dispense with our obligations to duty, but must require it in order to our personal title to eternal life.

That God should make this provision as hath been shewn, was all of grace and without works. But shall it be said, that any are invested with this privilege, without the necessary qualification of a holy life? Though eternal life is the gift of God, can we think he hath no regard to the quality of the persons on whom this gift is bestowed? What, shall the unholy and impure, be thought as meet objects of this grace, as those who are renewed in the spirit of their minds, and the sinner have the same title to it as the saint? This is indeed to level all distinctions, and to give the same encouragement to those who brake God's commandments, as those who keep them. This would be such a dishonour to the holiness, nay to the grace of God, as we cannot think of without abhorrence! — To speak with reverence — the blessed God cannot confer the benefit of eternal

nal life, without some regard to the temper and quality of those who receive it. — What? If, as I observed before, a prince should promise pardon and preferment to those who had been in arms against him, is not this condition tacitly implied that they submit to his government, and become loyal subjects? If he acted otherwise, his wisdom with great reason might be called in question. And what though the blessed God of his grace, without any desert of ours, hath called us to partake of eternal life, could he with honour to his perfections confer a personal title to it, without a holy life? He cannot but require it, unless we suppose what is impossible, that his grace should be the more magnified, by that which tends to the dishonour of his holiness. So that though in one sense we are *SAVED* without works, as it refers to the original grant and promise of eternal life, yet that we may eventually partake of it, good works are absolutely necessary.

Again. To this I may add, that eternal life, in the very nature of it, requires the qualification I am speaking of. — It is indispensable from the very kind and quality of the future blessedness. It is purity that gives a temper and turn of soul, essential to the happiness God hath promised. Heaven could be no happiness to an unrenewed mind. Purity is the very disposition necessary to the enjoying God — it is virtue, in the habit and

exercise of it, that forms the temper, without which, heaven itself could not make us happy — the discipline of the heart and life, which is no other than the practice of righteousness, is that which trains the mind for blessedness. The principles and habits of goodness, are a qualification not arbitrarily enjoined, but founded in the very nature of the felicity we have the hope and expectation of. Our compleat salvation from sin, and our attaining to a perfection of holiness, must have its beginnings in this world, or we shall not be admitted to the consummation of it in the next.

But I would observe once more, that though eternal life is the gift of God, yet good works are peremptorily required as the indispensable condition of our title to it.

Besides the many express injunctions to holiness or good works, backed by the authority of Jesus Christ, and enforced from the obligation of our profession, from the very nature and genius of our religion, bound upon us by every motive and argument proper to work upon the ingenuity and gratitude of our natures; I say besides these, we have the practice of holiness enforced, as we would ever hope for God's salvation.

It may suffice to lay the passages before you. They require no comment, they need only be attended to, to give you the strongest conviction of this truth, that though our
salvation

salvation is from God, yet that our personal title to it depends upon our persevering holiness. — Thus says our Lord, “blessed
 “are the pure in heart, for they shall see
 “God.” *Mat.* v. 8. And at ver. 20. “for
 “I say unto you, except your righteousness
 “exceeds the righteousness of the scribes
 “and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter in-
 “to the kingdom of heaven.” And chap.
 vii. 21. “not every one that saith unto me
 “Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom
 “of heaven, but he that doth the will of
 “my Father which is in heaven.” In the
 25th. chapter of *Matthew* from the 34th.
 verse to the end, our Lord assureth us, that
 works of charity flowing from a right prin-
 ciple, or the neglect of them, will be the
 reasons assigned of our acquitment or con-
 demnation at the day of judgment. The
 apostle tells us, *Rom.* ii. 6. “that God will
 “render to every man according to his deeds,
 “to them who by a patient continuing in
 “well doing, seek for glory, honour, and
 “immortality, eternal life, &c. And again,
 “glory, honour, and peace to every man
 “that worketh good, to the Jew first, and
 “also to the Gentile.” “We are debtors
 “not to the flesh to live after the flesh, for
 “if we live after the flesh we shall die, but
 “if through the spirit we mortify the deeds
 “of the body we shall live.” And again,
 “be not deceived, God is not mocked, for
 “what-

" whatsoever a man soweth that shall he al-
 " so reap : for he that soweth to the flesh,
 " shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he
 " that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spi-
 " rit reap life everlasting." *Rom. viii. 12. Gal.*
vi. 7, &c. And in the epistle to the *Corin-*
thians, " wherefore my beloved brethren,
 " be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abound-
 " ing in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as
 " ye know your labour is not in vain in the
 " Lord." And the apostle *Peter* in his 2d.
 epistle chap. i. 5. " besides this giving all di-
 " ligence, add to your faith virtue, to vir-
 " tue knowledge, to knowledge temperance,
 " &c. for if these things be in you and a-
 " bound, they make you that ye shall nei-
 " ther be barren nor unfruitful, in the know-
 " ledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
 " Christ." And at ver. 10. " wherefore the
 " rather brethren give all diligence, to make
 " your calling and election sure, for if
 " ye do these things (referring to the
 " forementioned duties) ye shall never fall,
 " and so an entrance shall be administered
 " to you abundantly, into the everlasting
 " kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
 " Christ." — These are a small part of the
 scriptures I might have quoted, but they are
 more than enough to confirm the point,
 that though eternal life is the gift of God,
 and flows from his bounty, yet that to our
 personal title to it, holiness or good works
 are

are absolutely necessary. — Here then I shall rest the matter. I have endeavoured to establish the sense of my text, I have explained the benefit of which the apostle speaks, namely, our being put into the way of salvation, and to this end called with a holy calling; I have considered that to which this benefit is ascribed, negatively and positively expressed, not to any antecedent works of righteousness of ours, but to the free purpose and grace of God given us in Christ before the world began; I have shewn that this refers to the original intention and design of God, the merciful provision made for our happiness, to which no works of ours could at all contribute. And as this account has been perverted to a meaning not intended by the apostle, I have shewn notwithstanding, that to our personal and final acceptance to eternal life, good works are absolutely necessary; the necessity of this was established in the purpose and decree of God; it was the very end for which the grace of God was manifested. Good works are included in the very nature of that faith, that will finally acquit or justify us at the bar of God. The rectitude and holiness of God require them. They are essential to our enjoying that eternal life, which God hath promised, and they are expressly required as the indispensable conditions of our title to it. — And from what hath been said, we learn,

(1.) That

(1.) That a right attention to scripture, (taking it in connection with itself) will preserve us from mistake, in forming our judgments of the doctrines of it.

It is the sense and meaning of scripture, and not the sound of it we are to be determined by, and a diligent examination is necessary, to the right understanding many parts of it; and no where is it more necessary, than where the apostle speaks of being **SAVED** by grace and without works; a close attention to the design of the apostle in those passages is necessary to the right understanding the meaning of them.

— The apostle *Peter* tells us, there are some passages in *St. Paul's* epistles hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction. Nor have any part of his epistles been so perverted, or been the occasion of so many mistakes, as what relate to the doctrines of grace, or the obligations of duty. It is necessary therefore we search the scriptures, if we would understand them. We are carefully to compare one part with another, and explain difficult passages, by those that are more easy; begging of God the spirit of wisdom for our instruction; that he would deliver us from all party-prejudice, and open our understandings to understand the scriptures. And it is especially the duty of publick instructors to

to apply themselves with great diligence and impartiality, to the study of the sacred writings. And though we would by no means bind our interpretations upon the consciences of others, yet we would assist them in the best manner we can, in their endeavours after sacred knowledge; and so direct their inquiries, as may contribute to their knowing the truth as it is in Jesus. — And to this end we would exhort you, when you read the scriptures, to do it with attention, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, the passages which speak of being SAVED without works, with others where they are expressly enjoined in order to salvation, and you will easily observe, that the one refer to it, as it was the original grant and promise of God, and the other respect those qualifications, which the holiness of God cannot dispense with to our final participation of it.

(2.) We learn that the grace of God in our salvation, and the practice of righteousness to ascertain our title to it, are in perfect harmony with one another.

It hath been shown, we are indebted to the grace of God for all our hopes of salvation. The design itself, and the provision made for it, are to be ascribed to the gracious purpose of God, exclusive of any works of ours. But you plainly see it by no means follows, that God hath no requirement of duty from us, or that personal holiness is

not necessary, to our partaking the benefits his grace has provided for us — it must argue great ignorance, or inattention to insist, that our being SAVED by grace, means that no terms or conditions are required, to our actual interest in this salvation. If this is to be meant by our being SAVED by grace, it is such grace, as does great dishonour to the holiness of God, and therefore cannot be the grace of the gospel. And that any can presume to assert it, with such a cloud of witnesses to the contrary, as the scriptures furnish us with, is really amazing. Sure it is an inference that naturally flows from the foregoing premises, that though the original grant of eternal life was all of grace, without any qualifications or desert of ours, yet that works of righteousness are absolutely necessary, which neither the holiness or mercy of God can dispense with.

(3.) We learn that to decry the practice of good works as in no connection with our final acceptance to eternal life, is a dangerous mistake, and founded in great ignorance. It is a very easy and delightful topic of discourse to many; and upon which, an ignorant enthusiast can be very fluent; and it too well suits the inclinations of many, to be told they have nothing to do to obtain eternal life. To trample upon good works, and ascribe all to faith, is a way that hath always had its admirers, but it is an admiration founded in ignorance, and hath a manifest

nifest tendency to delude the souls of men. It is abusing the scriptures to tell men they may be made righteous without the fruits of righteousness, and that good works are of no avail to their final acceptance with God. — What hath been said, I doubt not will carry conviction to those who are capable of it; which the meek and humble enquirers after truth, certainly are. Let others if they please degrade good works, let us remember, that Christ gave himself for this very purpose that we might be zealous in the practice of them. — And yet while we are so, let us ascribe our salvation to the grace of God. These I have shewn are in perfect harmony with one another, though it is presumption to think of being SAVED in any other way than that of holiness, yet the love of God is ever to be regarded as the spring of all our hope. It is God's salvation we have the promise of by Jesus Christ, though he will not dispence it without the necessary condition of a holy life. So that I may close this discourse with the words that introduced it, in which I trust we shall heartily join; ascribing the honour of our salvation to God, "who hath SAVED us, and "called us with a holy calling, not according "to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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